(No. XXV.)

THE PASTIME.

SCHENECTADY, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1807.

ORIGINAL PAPERS.

For the Pastime.

Nov. 16, 1807.

MR. EDITOR,

Your last number* has yielded me so much satisfaction, that I am induced to make a public acknowledgement of my gratitude. I have been educated to the belief of some rigid religious principles and doctrines, both mortifying and humiliating; and, as I place no authoritative reliance on my own judgment, I have not dared to question their justice or to refuse compliance with their requisitions. But, as fear, more than inclination has perpetuated my servitude, I embrace, with alacrity, this opportunity of shaking off my fetters. Nothing can be more galling than the chain of religious tyranny.

I have long been a secret advocate for the "purity of nature," and never could reconcile myself to the belief of original imperfection. It is equally mysterious, whether we believe the soul to be derived from Deity, by infusion, or from man by traduction. The dictates of nature must be unerring. Her productions must be perfect. I would as soon believe that the lamb could generate a lion, as that "holy nature" could produce a sinful creature. It is utterly inconsistent with the character of the author of the "cerulean sea" and "The cheering beauty of mid-day."

The subject considered in this light, opens too a most delightful prospect. If "nature" is "holy," and crimes and depravity are not her spontaneous fruits, we may anticipate the time when reason shall resume her empire over the passions. When "war and rumours of war shall cease under the whole heaven," and earth be a scene of peace and happiness.

It is not improbable that this age, which began to appear at the time of the Illuminati in France, will be finally introduced to that illustrious nation, which seems to be destined, in the councils of Providence, to be the ruler, the instructor, and the enlightener of the world. This circumstance almost induces me to believe, that my unknown friend is a Frenchman. As soon as the nations of the earth shall be subject to the same authority, be governed by the same laws, and embrace the same sentiments of justice and morality, we shall regain our forfeited right to the title of "men." However the speculations of French philosophers may

* See Pastime, page 161.

have been ridiculed, human perfectibility appears to be something more than a mere phantom of the imagination; and I am happy that one is found in my own county bold enough to appear as the asserter and supporter of such an opinion. Truth is so inviting, that she need but be exposed in order to be embraced. The train once laid, a spark may produce the explosion. The very idea of an original tendency to corruption, is the principal cause of human depravity. Inculcate the "purity of nature," and man will make it his duty and his pride to preserve it.

It appears to me farther probable, that all savage animals will one day be tamed by the hand of man. For it is unreasonable to suppose, that all mankind should live in amity, and that beasts alone should retain their ferocity; or, perhaps, they imbibe it with the air which is contaminated by man. If so, the progress of perfection in animals will keep pace with its progress in man. But this analogy does not cease here; and I cannot help reflecting that the facility with which it accounts for the moral and natural disorders of this world, is a strong argument in favor of its truth. The earth itself and its productions have been infected by the depravity of him, who, by his enormities, has forfeited his title to "humanity." This phenomenon admits of a natural solution. The principle of vegetation in herbs and trees is perpetuated by the same element that continues respiration in man and brutes. And as vegetables, flowers, and trees imbibe the air which man respires, it is reasonable to conclude that they have by that means become degenerate and noxious. Remove this cause, and we have reason to suppose that the effect will cease. The golden age will then succeed this age of brass. Then

> Magnus ab integro sæclorum nascitur ordo.
> —— nec magnos metuent armenta leones.
> Occidet et serpens, et fallax herba veneni.
> —— omnis feret omnia tellus.

With the prophetic poet, I add *Talia secla, currite.*

One question only, through the medium of your paper, I wish my unknown friend to solve. If there be no original infection, a divine mediation is absurd, and the scripture is a lie. How, on rational principles, shall we then account for the voluminous testimony by which both these facts are supported? I have no doubt, but the ingenuity of my friend will find a satisfactory solution. I should otherwise not have started the difficulty. It is no greater than might have been expected by those who undertake a reformation in religion. These nobly daring adventurers justly suffer no trifling impediments to retard their course. One dash of their pen is equivalent to a volume of the arguments of others.

LOOKER ON.

BIOGRAPHY.

Mr. ROBERT BLOOMFIELD.

CONCLUDED.

When he had finished his poem, he submitted it to the opinion of some persons in London. But, either from a total want of taste, or of liberality they examined the poem with an apathy worthy only of ignorance, and regarded the poet with an indifference that fully evinced their utter unworthiness of the honor done them. The greater part of mankind are but as overgrown children, and their attention must be engaged either by a sounding name or the gilded trappings of vanity. At length, he happily got his poem into the hands of Mr. Capel Lofft, a gentleman and a scholar, possessing a mind competent to define the merits of a literary work, and a heart generously disposed to foster genius, although dwelling in a Farmer's Boy, and to clear a path to its deserved reward. Mr. Lofft read it, and approved it. He had at first, an apprehension that it was one of those vain and injudicious attempts that had been made before, of transmuting the noble poem of Thomson's Seasons into rhyme; but, on reading it, he was most agreeably deceived. "I had soon," says he, "the pleasure of finding myself relieved from that apprehension, and of discovering that, although the delineation of rural scenery naturally branches itself into those divisions, there was little else except the general qualities of a musical ear, flowing numbers, feeling piety, poetic imagery, and animation; a taste for the picturesque, a true sense of the natural and pathetic force of thought and liveliness of imagination which were in common between Thomson and this author." When Mr. Lofft had indulged himself in contemplating the beauties of the Farmer's Boy, he sent it to an eminent literary friend, who read it with the highest satisfaction, and who instantly communicated his opinion of it to the publishers, Messrs. Vernor and Hood of the Poultry. They accepted it upon terms honorable to themselves, and satisfactory to its author, and Mr. Lofft in his behalf. This latter gentleman kindly undertook the task of preparing and revising the sheets for the press. He found it necessary to make a few trifling corrections in the orthography, and in the grammatical construction; but not a line is added, or substantially altered through the whole poem. The first edition was published in March, 1800, and its subsequent success, and numerous editions, at once confirm the merit of its author and the taste of his patrons.

The Farmer's Boy was no sooner introduced to the public, than he was admired and received by every person who claimed any pretension to taste. Mr. Robert Bloomfield found numerous patrons, who poured upon him their praises, and their presents. Among these were some persons of the first distinction; as, his royal highness the duke of York, the duke of Grafton, sir Charles Bunbury, &c. and while rank and title were paying the homage ever due to genius, the learned world were no less forward in exalting him in their public commendations; particularly Dr. Drake, who in his Literary Hours has written a masterly critique upon the Farmer's Boy.

The consequence of this deserved success was, that Mr. Bloomfield soon emerged from poverty and obscurity, and began to feel the blessings of ease and fortune.

Twelve years had elapsed, since he trod his native ground, and saw his dear relations, and during this long interval his desires had increased to accomplish this event, which now the gloomy barrier of poverty being

removed, he put in execution, and enjoyed the sweet satisfaction of embracing, in health his aged mother, and of presenting to her, with his own hand, a copy of his poem.

"My heart was rous'd; and fancy on the wing,
Thus heard the language of enchanting SPRING:
'Come to thy native groves and fruitful fields,
Thou know'st the fragrance that her wild flow'r yields;
Inhale the breeze that bends the purple bud,
And plays along the margin of the wood.
I've cloth'd them all; the very woods where thou
In infancy learn'dst praise from every bough
Wouldst thou again behold the vernal day?
My reign is short: this instant come away;
E're Philomel shall silent meet the morn,
She hails the green, but not the rip'ning corn.
Come, ere the pastures lose their yellow flow'rs;
Come now with heart as jocund as the hours.'
Who could resist the call?".....

He was received in the country with every mark of respect; for his fame had travelled before him, and persons of every station, from the nobleman to the peasant, thought it an honor to share the company of the Farmer's Boy.

The demand for this delightful poem still remains unceasing, and the author has enjoyed the satisfaction of finding it translated into the Latin, French and Italian languages.

He has since produced his "Rural Tales:" and very lately a volume, entitled, "Wild Flowers," a work not less marked for its sweet simplicity than the former, and which has been received with the greatest success.

Mr. Robert Bloomfield is, in his disposition, mild, amiable, and feeling—as his works will sufficiently evince. His person is slender, and about five feet four in height; his complexion very dark; his features by no means vivacious, but marked with thought. He is at present about thirty nine years old, and has, we believe, a family of four children.

LITERARY INTELLIGENCE.

Messrs. WRIGHT, GOODENOW, and STOCKWELL, Troy, enterprising booksellers and gentlemen of literary taste and erudition, will this week publish the first American impression of Salvo's travels. This work is new and interesting. It describes a tour, effected in 1806, from Italy, through the Tyrol, Styria, Bohemia, Gallicia, Poland and Livonia. It contains, likewise, the particulars of Mrs. Spencer Smith's liberation from the hands of the French police, and of her subsequent flight through the countries above mentioned. The present edition will be comprised in a duodecimo volume, of about 240 pages, printed with new and handsome type, on white vellum paper, and ornamented by an elegant likeness of the author, engraved by Fairman.

From the same press, two medical works, recently published in London, and strongly recommended by practitioners, will issue early in the winter. The first "A view of the nervous temperament; being a practical enquiry into the prevalence, prevention,

and treatment of nervous, bilious, stomach and liver complaints; indigestion, low spirits, gout, etc. by Thomas Trotter," a very distinguished physician. The second, "Observations on abortion; containing an account of the manner in which it takes place, the causes which produce it, and the method of preventing or treating it: by John Burns, lecturer on midwifery, and member of the faculty of physicians and surgeons in Glasgow." These works will be neatly printed in duodecimo, on good paper, and fair type.

Samuel Mackay, of Boston, late professor of the French language at Williams' college, proposes to publish, by subscription, a full *History of France*, from the year 1787, and without chasm, to the peace with Austria, after the battle of Austerlitz. This publication will comprise 4 volumes 8vo. of 500 pages each, price $2 50 per volume. The documents for this momentous and desirable work, are derived from sources the most legitimate.

Mr. Henry Dean, an eminent writing master, and the ingenious author of the *Analytical Guide*, purposes to publish a splendid impression of that useful and entertaining work. It will be enriched with additional engravings, by distinguished artists. This production is sanctioned by men of letters and taste. It abounds in historical research. The practical directions are simple and perspicuous, and illustrated by beautiful examples.

The distinguished and adroit Editor of the Port Folio has announced that the next volume of this invaluable Journal, will be executed in a very brilliant style.

A poem has been lately published in Paris, entitled *Virgil in France; or, The New Æneid;* an heroic comic poem, in the Franco-Gothic style; in which *The Æneid* of *Virgil* is travestied into a history of the French revolution, by M. Leplat du Temple. In this work, *Æolus* is the king of England; the *Trojans*, the French; *Priam*, Lous XVI: the *Harpies*, the Monks of Belgium, &c.

FROM THE PORT FOLIO.

Mr. Oldschool,

The executors of the last will of Gen. Hamilton have deposited in the Public Library of N. York a copy of "*The Federalist*," which belonged to the General in his life time, in which he has designated, in his own hand-writing, the parts of that celebrated work written by himself, as well as those contributed by Mr. Jay and Mr. Madison. As it may not be uninteresting to many of your readers, I shall subjoin a copy of the General's *memorandum* for publication in "The Port Folio." M.

Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 54, Mr. Jay.

Nos. 10, 14, 37, to 48, inclusive, Mr. Madison.

Nos. 18, 19, 20, Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Madison jointly—all the rest by Mr. Hamilton.

VARIETY.

The following, like every thing else in Desmoutier's Mythology, is very happily tu ned. We translate it for the benefit of those who are unskilled in the French langu ge; very literally, indeed, but well enough to convey some idea of the sentiment.

Juno transported Iris to Heaven, gave her a violet rose and wings, and made her a messenger. The brilliancy of her robe draws a long track of light in the air which is called the rainbow; so that when you see this in a fine day, say to yourself "'Tis Iris on an errand—Juno, perhaps, gives a supper this evening." As for you, Emilie, be assured

Si vous etiez Iris, et si dame Junon,
Par caprice, daignait me faire
L'honneur de m' inviter a souper sans facon—
J'oublirais l' invitation
Pour inviter la messagere.

If you were Iris, and if dame Juno, by caprice, should deign to do me the honour of inviting me to supper, without ceremony, I should forget the invitation, to invite the messenger.

Blessed is he who expecteth nothing, for he shall not be disappointed!—*Swf*.

G. nius is like the misletoe on the rock. It seems to exist upon the barren and unyielding surface only by its own resources, and the nourishment it receives from the dew of heaven.—*Letters to Leinwha.*

FROM THE GERMAN OF MOZART.

Forget me not, should mirth allow thee leisure
To think on me; while cares my heart destroy;
Forget me not, should sorrow damp thy pleasure
And rouse the troubled soul from golden dreams of joy.

And should the love of change prefer unmeaning folly
To faith that ne'er deceiv'd, and pleasing melancholy,
My eye shall speak in tears that trickle for thy lot,
Forget me not, forget me not.

Forget me not, tho' heedless of my anguish,
Fortune should tear thee from my arms,
While months and years, condemn'd in vain to languish,
My tongue repeats thy name, my mind revolves thy charms.

Ah! consecrate to me some little fleeting hour,
For time and distance yield to friendship's magic power;
My heart will cry to thine, whate'er may be my lot,
Forget me not, forget me not.

Galileo, was the first improver of Telescopes who applied them to astronomic purposes. This important addition to human knowledge, which seems to overleap the hitherto insurmountable barrier of immense space, was originally produced by the children of one Hansen, a spectacle maker, at Middleburgh, in Holland, who playing in their father's shop, accidently placed a convex and a concave glass in such a manner, that in looking through them at the church weathercock, they observed it to appear much nearer, and considerably larger than usual; their loud expressions of surprize, excited the curiosity of their father, who after examining, and ascertaining the fact, soon conveyed it to the learned.

Original Poetry.

Description of a fair lady, from sir Philip Sydney's Arcadia.

That which made her fairness much the fairer, was that it was but a fair ambassador to a fairer mind.

Her hair (alas! too poor a word—why should I not call them her beams!) was drawn up in a net, able to have caught Jupiter when he was in the form of an eagle.

The fine proportion of her glove, show'd what a dainty guest was wont there to be lodged.

She made the lute in his language shew how glad it was to be touch'd by her fingers.

Her eyes so lifted towards the sky, that one would have thought they had begun to fly thither-ward to take their place among their fellow stars.

Her face was a register of nature's wonders.

The needle with so pretty a manner made its career to and fro through the cloth, as if it would have seemed loth to go from such a mistress, but that it hop'd to return thitherward again.—The cloth looked with many eyes upon her, and lovingly embraced the wounds she gave it.

SHIPS.—In our old poetry and romances we frequently read of ships superbly decorated. This was taken from real life. Froissart, speaking of the French fleet, in 1387, prepared for the invasion of England under the reign of Richard the second, says, that the ships were painted from top to bottom, glittering with gold. The ship of Lord Gay, of Tremoyll, was so sumptuously garnished that the painting and colours cost 2000 French franks, more than 222 pounds of English currency at that time (see Grafton's Chron. p. 364). At his second expedition into France, in 1417, King Henry the Fifth was in a ship whose sails were of purple silk, most richly embroidered with gold (Speed's Chron. b. ix, p. 636, edit. 1611). Many other instances might be brought from ancient miniatures and illuminations.

Would you, on bidding the world an eternal adieu, feel any other sentiments for those you should leave behind you, than the gentle, sweet emotions of love and benevolence? Why then do you now suffer any others to beat in your bosom? Is it the false appearance of interest? Destroy the fallacy—or, if interest comes in opposition to happiness, you cannot hesitate which to sacrifice, since the end of interest, is only to purchase felicity.

ORIGINAL POETRY.

To the Editor of the Pastime.

SIR,

A lady, whose native sprightliness, during periods of indisposition, or serious incubration, frequently changes to dejection, wild and evil forebodings, and romantick melancholy; and for whom, on such occasions, a numerous acquaintance undergo considerable anxiety, having expressed a desire to hear as much reading to divert her mind in sickness as possible, I sent her after retiring, the following lines, hastily written on a subject of no small importance. You will dispose of them as your judgment may dictate. Although a fear to excite unmerited censure, or groundless suspicion of some partial feelings, by asking for a good reader, if of *our* sex, may exclude the fair from all *mental* assistance when in low health, yet I cannot but wish most heartily, that these lines, however feeble and imperfect they may appear, may dispose *some* to avail themselves of the advantages of so salutary a prescription.

Yours &c.

AMICUS ÆGROTARUM.

Original Poetry.

Thrice happy am I, CORA, to observe,
That when, at times, sickness confines at home,
You seem to know the best and quickest way
To cure yourself, and thereby cure us all:—
Yes; I do know, (if you will dogmas suffer,)
That books with judgment used will do as much
In many cases, and with some in all,
As the physician's most consummate skill.

Oft, when distress and pain have, ling'ring, hung
Upon my pillow, to extend belief
That I should rise no more; and oft'ner, when
Dejection—poverty—and worse than death—
Have nearly overwhelmed me: 'mid all these,
I've been enabled with the aid of *books*
To soften sorrow and confound disease—
To drive despair and dreaded ills away,
And make, in calm reflection, all things fair.

This pow'r have books, or friends—yet friends fatigue
Too oft o'er-anxious for a friend's relief:
But books await our wish without our bidding—
Without the least mistrust that they oppress us,
Or e'en that we, belike, may wish them gone.

Fly freely, then, to books, and ask some friend
To read, ON THIS CONDITION: *not to read,*
But when you wish to hear—at other times
To slip away, and harbor no distrust
Of you, or of plain self; but just to think
And feel, that *you*, and ONLY *you*, can tell
When best *to hear*, *to see*, and *to be seen.*

Mayhap, such friend you cannot always find;
But then, some day, some hour most surely will
Bring one for that *one* time—and some book med'cine,
If not *always* used, will do *some* good:
And ever and anon, when intellect is free,
Call up the last-read piece, and *that* will yield
A *second* solace or diversion, till
Some other or the same obsequious friend
Renews the theme, or chooses out a better.

Thus from day to day the mind diverted,
And itself estranged from sadness and disease,
Leads on the body, also, by degrees,
To rest, recov'ry, and to perfect health.

May such th' opinion be of all who pine
In sickness or in sorrow!———
For *once convinced* that this is salutary,
You need not fear the shafts of melancholy:
Nor can disease itself long countervail
The *regulation* of the thoughts within.
The *mind*, thus used, acquires a strength and governance
That renders all the pangs that pain inflicts
Less poignant or but *secondary* ills,
Or, left *unthought-of*, makes them none at all.

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